

Response Summary Report

Date Run: Oct 28, 2008 11:08

1. Are you currently a contractor for one or more of these programs?

Value	Count	Percent
Yes	18	62%
No	11	38%
Total Responses:	29	

2. Are you currently a subcontractor for one or more of these programs?

Value	Count	Percent
Yes	18	62%
No	11	38%
Total Responses:	29	

3. Did you apply as a bidder for at least one of these programs?

Value	Count	Percent
Yes	18	62%
No	11	38%
Total Responses:	29	

4. Would you describe your agency as:

Value	Count	Percent
Private, non-profit	25	86%
Private, for-profit	3	10%
Public	1	3%
Total Responses:	29	

5. What is level of position of the person completing this survey?

Value	Count	Percent
Agency director/CEO	26	90%
CFO	1	3%
Other/Please specify:	1	3%
VP of Government Relations	1	3%
Total Responses:	29	

6. The bidding process was consistent from RFP to RFP.

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	9	31%
No opinion	8	28%
Disagree	8	28%
Strongly agree	2	7%
Strongly disagree	2	7%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	11	38%
Disagree	10	34%
No opinion	8	28%
	29	

7. The RFPs were generally clear and well written.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	14	48%
No opinion	6	21%
Agree	5	17%
Strongly disagree	3	10%
Strongly agree	1	3%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	17	59%
Agree	6	21%
No opinion	6	21%
	29	

8. The RFP bidding process has been implemented fairly.

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	11	38%
Disagree	8	28%
No opinion	5	17%
Strongly disagree	3	10%
Strongly agree	2	7%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	13	45%
Disagree	11	38%
No opinion	5	17%
	29	

9. Performance measures used in these contracts are appropriate to ensure better results for kids.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	14	50%
Strongly disagree	7	25%
Agree	4	14%
No opinion	2	7%
Strongly agree	1	4%
Total Responses:	28	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	21	75%
Agree	5	18%
No opinion	2	7%
	28	

10. Accreditation (i.e., COA, JCAHO, CARF) should continue to be a requirement of RFP bidders.

Value	Count	Percent
Strongly agree	9	31%
Disagree	9	31%
No opinion	5	17%
Agree	3	10%
Strongly disagree	3	10%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	12	41%
Disagree	12	41%
No opinion	5	17%
	29	

Comments

The process was arbitrary and the rules seem to change with each rfp. the rfps were long and complicated and completely unrelated to achieving good results for children
We have recently acheived JCAHO accreditation. While the process to achieve this status was useful in many respects—I don't believe that accreditation is, by itself, an accurate indication of provider quality or an assurance of positive outcomes. It is costly for providers and creates more paperwork and policies—not much impact upon practice, in my view.
The accreditation requirement favors larger agencies and may reduce innovation and the number of responses.
There are other ways to ensure quality other than accreditation. If an agency is licensed by the state that should meet the requirements. Having to have other accreditation could be a deterrent to smaller or less financially secure agencies.

Iowa clearly is focussed on better results for kids and families. DHS should be commended for holding off on the Group Care RFP until the process and content can be reviewed and improved for all involved.
No Opinion' means have no information to respond. Performance measures are compliance driven and not looking at the long term effect of service. Accreditation is no indication that an agency provides an effective service for severe at risk children.
The work is very compliance process driven, focus is on deadlines and compliance with documentation deadlines. Then contractors are punished with rate deductions if enough deadlines are not met. There is still way too much focus on process, and not enough focus on meaningful work with families.
Many agencies who are not accredited can do a great job providing these services. I think what is important is the quality of staff providing the service and the oversight.
Either have a state licensing process or have accreditation. It is expensive in time and finances for both the state and the agencies to do both. It is best for all if we can keep the cost of licensing and accreditation as low as possible so we can invest in the kids and families being served. Double requirements increase the cost and limit the ability of some to participate.

Suggestions for Improvement

the rfp process should be done by a dept other than dhs
Let the free market reign! Managing multiple RFP's and resulting contracts create a compartmentalized systems (patchwork) with various pieces of a continuum contracted out to a variety of providers. This creates a need for many levels of bureaucracy to review proposals, award contracts, oversee/monitor contracts, etc. The costs of administering a patchwork system of this sort must be very high--although I am not sure anyone is calculating those costs.
Begin to post the RFP for review and comment prior to final RFP being announced. Take the comments into consideration prior to final posting. The single agency contracts create too much risk for the contractor.
I would suggest that licensing by the state would suffice.
The FSRP contract is going through ongoing revisions. Had Provider input been sought prior to the release, the transition to these services would have been greatly improved for all involved. The performance measures that are compliance related do not measure outcomes for children or quality of service as much as frequency of contact and who needs to be seen.
RFP's are very redundant. Would be easier and more cost efficient if we did not have to restate text. Numbering system for questions would be adequate. All "requirements" should be in one section, preferably at the beginning or end (eg, font size, # of copies, etc). End the process focus.
contractors are being reimbursed for performance however case management lies (authority) with the dept. FSRP deliverables are too prescriptive-not necessarily tied to best outcomes.
The reimbursement was too low and did not allow for qualified agencies to submit a proposal. It would be important to have a focus group to include agencies on what the proposal should look like and what the services should look like.
Contracts are to an extreme. It is very difficult to get the full idea of what the state wants with the stringent questioning and the restrictions of communications with state and other organizations. I believe the RFP process over corrected after a lawsuit where all were punished out of one situation. We should all know that lawsuits will happen -- even if things are done right, but we need to be careful to not impair the services and productivity of all due to one situation. Most what needs to happen is that the private and state organizations need to work together and develop needs and services together. As the state moves forward they need to clarify their strategic plans for 5 years or so ahead so we can all work toward those goals.

11. My agency has a good relationship with DHS at the state level.

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	18	62%
Disagree	5	17%
Strongly agree	3	10%
Strongly disagree	2	7%
No opinion	1	3%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	21	72%
Disagree	7	24%
No opinion	1	3%
	29	

12. My agency has a good relationship with DHS at the local level.

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	18	62%
Strongly agree	6	21%
Disagree	3	10%
No opinion	2	7%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	24	83%
Disagree	3	10%
No opinion	2	7%
	29	

13. The RFP contracts provide reimbursement at an adequate level to ensure quality services.

Value	Count	Percent
Strongly disagree	17	59%
Disagree	9	31%
No opinion	2	7%
Agree	1	3%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	26	90%
No opinion	2	7%
Agree	1	3%
	29	

14. Providers are now able to spend more time with families, less time on documentation/paperwork.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	13	45%
Strongly disagree	9	31%
Agree	5	17%
No opinion	2	7%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	22	76%
Agree	5	17%
No opinion	2	7%
	29	

15. Overall, the RFPs are strengthening my local community's capacity to provide services to at-risk children and families.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	9	32%
Strongly disagree	8	29%
No opinion	6	21%
Agree	5	18%
Total Responses:	28	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	17	61%
No opinion	6	21%
Agree	5	18%
	28	

16. The RFPs have made it more difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff.

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	10	34%
Strongly agree	9	31%
No opinion	7	24%
Disagree	2	7%
Strongly disagree	1	3%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	19	66%
No opinion	7	24%
Disagree	3	10%
	29	

17. The RFPs have improved agencies' ability to provide staff training.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	14	48%
No opinion	8	28%
Agree	3	10%
Strongly disagree	3	10%
Strongly agree	1	3%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	17	59%
No opinion	8	28%
Agree	4	14%
	29	

18. The RFPs have resulted in increased financial risk for providers.

Value	Count	Percent
Strongly agree	22	76%
Agree	5	17%
No opinion	2	7%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	27	93%
No opinion	2	7%
	29	

19. The RFPs have resulted in increased liability for providers.

Value	Count	Percent
Strongly agree	17	61%
Agree	7	25%
No opinion	2	7%
Disagree	1	4%
Strongly disagree	1	4%
Total Responses:	28	

Value	Count	Percent
Agree	24	86%
No opinion	2	7%
Disagree	2	7%
	28	

20. The RFPs have resulted in agencies increasing the range of services they provide.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	11	39%
No opinion	6	21%
Agree	5	18%
Strongly agree	3	11%
Strongly disagree	3	11%
Total Responses:	28	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	14	50%
Agree	8	29%
No opinion	6	21%
	28	

21. My agency is trying to reduce our involvement with DHS-funded child welfare services.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	11	39%
Agree	5	18%
No opinion	5	18%
Strongly agree	4	14%
	3	11%
Total Responses:	28	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	14	50%
Agree	9	32%
No opinion	5	18%
	28	

Comments

these rfps have dismantled what little services we had left in iowa. agencies are looking for every way possible to get away from doing business with dhs. the loss of local agencies will be staggering
My agency is finding that, as we work through the initial months of performance based contracts, we are gradually developing an improved sense of partnership with DHS at all levels. This will continue over time and we are eager to continue our work on becoming good partners for the sake of Iowa's children and families.
The "no opinion" response really is intended as a "do not know" reponse, but "do not know" was not an option. We have no time to assess how the larger community is reponding, and have received no information about this. Recruitment and retention of staff is a huge problem. We calculate the number of cases a worker needs to handle so that our costs are covered. DHS workers are still very precriptive, and very often require hours of services and supervised visits. Contractor workers are then working way over 40 hours a week, often seven days a week, and easily get to the point of quitting. With the low rates and the compliance driven system, we are in a no-win situation.
Although the core of our mission is to strengthen children and families, our Board of Directors have created strategic goals that require us to diversify our funding streams. Additionally, we are not in a financial position to continue to "carry" programs that are losing money, therefore difficult decisions will need to be made in the future.
Programs are compliance process driven with poor payment rates.
In what I see DHS has changed their requirements for children to receive services. It should still be open to all ages and the same for all ages. If there is a problem with agencies and the services they provide, it should be brought to the attention of that agency and make it possible for other agencies to participate. It is also difficult to cover a huge area and be able to provide adequate supervision.
My small agency was happy to serve DHS through a sub-contract, but our lead agency terminated the contract as of October 31, 2008.

Suggestions for Improvement

terminate existing rfp contracts and start over. pattern the effort after a state which has been successful such as florida
It would be extremely valuable for providers to be "at the table" as models of practice are designed before an RFP is developed. This would bring Iowa's best assets together from the outset and would improve the quality of RFPs and the ensuing contracts.
Revamp programs based on what is in the best interest of child.
Increase the reimbursement rate significantly. That will make a world of difference. Lessen compliance. Train DHS front line staff on how to make case decisions and work within the new system, train and retrain, or let them go.
I feel more agencies (rather than the large ones who won the contract) gave competition and quality services due to that competition.

RFP's need to be very open and the state needs to set them up so that agencies can be creative. The state needs to be direct and tell us if they don't want to provide a service in the future so non profits can prepare to either provide it privately, plan to do other services, or shut their doors. Agencies and state must be a team together to help kids. Secrets and separation are not the qualities of a healthy team. If we are not a team together everyone loses -- especially the clients being served and ultimately non profits are lost and never again available to help kids and families... Investing in kids and families is much more cost effective than building more prisons.

22. There is greater flexibility in providing services as a result of the RFPs.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	12	41%
Agree	6	21%
No opinion	6	21%
Strongly disagree	4	14%
Strongly agree	1	3%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	16	55%
Agree	7	24%
No opinion	6	21%
	29	

23. There is a stronger ability to engage families in assessment and service delivery as a result of the RFPs.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	9	31%
Agree	6	21%
No opinion	6	21%
Strongly disagree	6	21%
Strongly agree	2	7%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	15	52%
Agree	8	28%
No opinion	6	21%
	29	

24. The RFPs have resulted in greater safety for Iowa's at-risk children.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	10	34%
Strongly disagree	10	34%
No opinion	5	17%
Agree	3	10%
Strongly agree	1	3%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	20	69%
No opinion	5	17%
Agree	4	14%
	29	

25. The RFPs have enhanced the likelihood of achieving permanency for younger children.

Value	Count	Percent
No opinion	10	34%
Disagree	8	28%
Agree	4	14%
Strongly disagree	4	14%
Strongly agree	3	10%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	12	41%
No opinion	10	34%
Agree	7	24%
	29	

26. The RFPs have enhanced the likelihood of achieving permanency for older youth.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	14	48%
Strongly disagree	7	24%
No opinion	5	17%
Agree	2	7%
Strongly agree	1	3%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	21	72%
No opinion	5	17%
Agree	3	10%
	29	

27. The RFPs have improved our ability to provide culturally responsive services.

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	11	39%
No opinion	8	29%
Strongly disagree	5	18%
Agree	4	14%
Total Responses:	28	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	16	57%
No opinion	8	29%
Agree	4	14%
	28	

28. Overall, the RFPs are improving outcomes for Iowa's children and families.

Value	Count	Percent
Strongly disagree	9	31%
No opinion	8	28%
Disagree	7	24%
Agree	3	10%
Strongly agree	2	7%
Total Responses:	29	

Value	Count	Percent
Disagree	16	55%
No opinion	8	28%
Agree	5	17%
	29	

Comments

rfps have effectively destroyed our ability to keep children safe. the reimbursement and micro management makes it impossible to serve families and children in a responsible way
too soon to say
Don't know in 'no opinion' answers - data not available
There are 3 "no opinion" responses in this section because we have no information/data on which to make any other selection. I think there should have been a "do not know" option. The "disagrees" have to do with the fact that this is still very much a compliance process driven system, and really helps to amplify that youth in transition have few options, and that cultural competence is hard to achieve and way too expensive for this underfunded system. Youth who do not have families to rely on and live with have few good options for safe affordable housing, and for support from consistent staff. Even with PALS (also underfunded), staff consistency is lacking. DHS transition staff are too few and far between, and some do not work well with youth! Multilingual staff are too expensive to hire (with the rates we are paid), and buying translation services can cost hundreds of dollars a month for one family. We were promised flexibility but that has not happened. We are focused on deadlines and timely emails, and are working hard not to have rate reductions. In spite of all this we have staff
If it looks like we are serving fewer children and that there are fewer children in foster care, guidelines have changed for the children that come thru DHS. If DHS is hesitant to refer families to the contractor, it should be explored why that is and is it truly happening.
Too early to tell if the RFP will result in improved results for children and thier families.
As far as culturally reponsive, now all services are provided by large agencies and the small agencies are not involved with DHS clients within their own communities and that does make us a culturally responsive state.

RFP's do not guarantee anything. They are simply a contract with an organization. The questions above are not possible to answer because in some situations things are great and in others... they are not. The big RFP's that have come out for FSRP and REMEDIAL were not healthy, but they are starting to get better. It seems the state expects the winner of the RPF to do it better than the state has ever done and to do it NOW like flipping on a switch. Both of these RFP's have been expensive to get going and take a lot of time to get figured out.

Suggestions for Improvement

again, scrap the current rfps and start over
Need data on results. Pay a decent reimbursement rate, and lessen the focus on deadlines and compliance. Train and retrain DHS front line staff and let go those who will not follow directions and will not work in the spirit of the new system.
Need more state data on results including outcomes of DHS workers to achieve goals.
Offer state contracts to all qualified agencies as in the past.
Contracts are needed to do business. What improves services is communication and team work. Along that line the contract needs to pay for the cost of the services. Kids are safer when the state and the contractor are working together. Along that line, agencies should not have to look like the state to help kids. All of your creativity is lost when a contract has so much detail in it that it takes the mission away from the organization and makes them act like the state. We must value our differences and work together.

29. My overall impression of the foster care recruitment and retention contract is:

Value	Count	Percent	Value	Count	Percent
No opinion	9	31%	Negative	11	38%
Negative	8	28%	No opinion	9	31%
Positive	7	24%	Positive	9	31%
Very negative	3	10%		29	
Very positive	2	7%			
Total Responses:	29				

Comments

family foster care in iowa has vanished. foster homes are leaving in droves, children are placed far from home and split up. foster care needs to be done by the region at most. a state wide effort is utterly without merit
Turnover and recruitment of foster parents is problematic
Very underfunded. Still lots of bugs to be worked out. Families and kids do not always get matched well. Kids not placed near their birth families. Recruitment efforts very weak. Foster families have multiple workers going into their homes, so this is hard for the families, in knowing who to talk with about what issues. And then lots of families do not have placements; do not know what that is about.
You hear nothing from them. Seems to be a lack of foster homes and many foster homes need supportive services when children are placed with them.
Based on what I have heard from foster families and DHS workers.
This is finally hitting its stride. Lots of good things happening with outcomes and figuring out weak and strong areas. Seems like the state workers are starting to relax more and work with us.

30. My overall impression of the community care contract is:

Value	Count	Percent	Value	Count	Percent
Very negative	11	38%	Negative	16	55%
No opinion	10	34%	No opinion	10	34%
Negative	5	17%	Positive	3	10%
Positive	2	7%		29	
Very positive	1	3%			
Total Responses:	29				

Comments

a waste of money. no one uses it or has even heard of it. the state auditor should be doing an investigation
Never hear anything about about program other than much dollars spent in this area.
Do not hear much about this at all, which is interesting. The contractor gets paid a monthly amount, no matter how many cases they have- very different than the other contracts- and are probably making lots of money considering projected caseloads were never realized. The contractor is a for-profit corporation, was going to have subcontractors, but ended up keeping all the work. Interesting.
Who are these people? I have never heard from them. We had one family that ws referred to them and the family saw the worker once. We had to provide the translation for the family and it took days to get the initial response.
Community care refers to partner or non partner agencies close enough to serve families which I see as a benefit to families.
I don't know as much of how this is going, but it seems to become a good RFP.

31. My overall impression of the shelter care contract is:

Value	Count	Percent	Value	Count	Percent
No opinion	11	39%	No opinion	11	39%
Positive	10	36%	Positive	10	36%
Negative	6	21%	Negative	7	25%
Very negative	1	4%		28	
Total Responses:	28				

Comments

an inept response to a crisis that dhs let develop. shelter is important to the system but relies on other parts , such as foster care, working. with out foster care, in home services etc shelter is stuck
There has been soem confusion over the recent move to convert some guaranteed payment beds into community emergency services. Are services only for DHS system kids, for example? These issues may become clearer over time as pilot projects are developed.
Agencies should not have allocated beds changed within the fiscal year. There would not be this problem of reducing the number of allocated beds if residential beds would not have been changed to shelter beds. Some facilities need the number of allocated beds in order to serve the wide area they cover, granted the number of beds used may not always be at the mas. Remember, you are paying for capacity.
This seems to be getting more proactive and thinking about the future ideas for programs, but along the way the process is so controlled and you always wonder what might happen next.

32. My overall impression of the safety and permanency contract is:

Value	Count	Percent	Value	Count	Percent
No opinion	9	31%	Negative	15	52%
Negative	8	28%	No opinion	9	31%
Very negative	7	24%	Positive	5	17%
Positive	4	14%		29	
Very positive	1	3%			
Total Responses:	29				

Comments

this rfp is so far out of the norm that it is almost impossible to comment. the amount of reimbursement is low to the point of being ridiculous and the expectations of dhs workers are delusional. other states look at this and just shake their heads
There were some rough spots at the beginning but we have good relationships with Service Area Managers and they have been instrumental in working through issues and improving results. Generally, however, it is important to note that this contract is severely underfunded.
rates to contractors are deplorable
Rates are low for expectations - compliance driven - DHS workers need supervision to understand program's intent.
Very underfunded. Still lots of bugs to be worked out. Compliance process driven. No flexibility. DHS front line staff were never trained to understand the difference between safety, permanency, remedial services, and the old RTSS! All this gets in the way of talking about quality.
I have heard nothing but negative comments about the provider. Even DHS does not want to refer to them.
While it is too early to know if the s/p contract will result in better lives for children and their families it has forced DHS and providers at the local level to work through issues, some longstanding and is gradually bringing both to common goals and eventually strategies.
My opinions range on different aspects of this one from agree to disagree. The agencies are being held for a lot of responsibility that we do not have control over. I think families are being helped, but there are some that cost a huge amount of money and hurt the financial stability of an organization trying to help families.

Additional Comments

these rfps and been negative on every level. the state needs to start over using successful models from other states as a template. if we dont do this soon the disaster for children will quickly be out of hand
I understand the desire to contain costs and achieve positive outcomes. I wonder if the quest to meet CFSR standards is shaping our delivery system in a way that is not in the best interest of those we are trying to serve?
The RFP process is needed to ensure that providers are held to the highest standards in achieving positive outcomes for children and families. I would also comment that the RFP process also included EBP as a requirement for the bidding process. I agree that EBP's are needed in achieving positive outcomes and need to continue to be a requirement for RFP's. Requiring agencies to be accredited is a must as the standards for accreditation are more intense and detailed than what the department may require. Accreditation also includes a quality assurance piece that ensures that agencies are held accountable to the administrative and service standards.
I believe Iowa is on the right track in moving to develop true partnerships with private agency providers through performance based contracting. We should continue down this path because experience in other states demonstrates that it takes at least five years for this effort to significantly improve results. However, in the long run the results are well worth the time and effort.

The RFP process has not been better for kids in Iowa. I beleive the RFP process is about money and the direct result of the resesign, Better Results for Kids. Which in my opinion has hurt older children. Older children are only able to receive services from the DHS if they have been severely abused or are in legal trouble. It has been stated by school personnel and families that they are waiting for children to get into trouble so they can receives services via JCS. I believe that is wrong for Iowa children. Thank you for this opportunity to express our concerns in way where there can be no fallout/consequences to our agencies for speaking the truth.

fsrp contractors do appreciate the willingness of dhs to re-examine the contract periodically.

Thank you for allowing me to complete this survey. Information covered has been difficult to get to policy makers to determine the impacts of the redesign changes.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to share!

I think it is important to ge ther viewpoints like you have just done.

The rate is too low to provide quality service. The RFP made it impossible for small agencies to apply. This resulted in agencies that provide quality service with great relationships with DHS staff and positive outcomes to be unable to provide child welfare services.

Again, I felt that the small agencies provided better service to families and the department. I feel that families will suffer in the long run when there is no competition for service providers.

I want to say that I have seen positive changes in the way the state is striving to do things in the last 10 months. Mary Nelson seems much more open to teaming up with providers and this advisory committee is a wonderful tool to help pull everyone together as we all want to help kids and families.